

PERSONNEL & BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 6, 2008

9:30 a.m.

Members Present: Leslie M. Ficcaglia (Chairperson), Betty Wilson, William Brown, Norman Tomasello, Francis Witt

Member Absent: Guy Campbell, Robert Hagaman, Ed Lloyd (Alternate)

Staff Present: John Stokes, Donna Connor, Robert Zampella, Karen Young, Eartha Williams

Others Present: Theresa Lettman, Jay Mounier

Chairperson Ficcaglia opened the meeting.

Chairperson Ficcaglia introduced the first agenda item, Approval of the Minutes of the January 31, 2008 Meeting. With no comments or questions, Chairperson Ficcaglia asked for a motion. The approval of Personnel and Budget Committee meeting minutes, both open and closed sessions, from January 31, 2008 was moved by Commissioner Tomasello, seconded by Commissioner Wilson and unanimously approved. Commissioner Brown abstained.

Chairperson Ficcaglia introduced the next agenda item, a resolution to Authorize the Executive Director to Accept a Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to Conduct a Study titled "The Effectiveness of Upland Buffer Zones in Mitigating the Impact of Suburbanization on the Integrity of Wetland Communities". Robert Zampella provided background information on this study. He stated that the Science Advisory and Science Committees previously reviewed the grant proposal. After some discussion regarding the funding for this cost sharing grant, Commissioner Ficcaglia asked for a motion to recommend Commission approval of the resolution. The motion was moved by Commission Tomasello, seconded by Commissioner Wilson and unanimously approved.

Chairperson Ficcaglia introduced the next agenda item, a resolution to Authorize the Executive Director to Enter into a New Cooperative Agreement with the National Park Service for Pinelands Monitoring. Donna Connor stated that this is the fourth Cooperative Agreement with the NPS in support of this long term monitoring program. Ms. Connor provided information pertaining to this year's funding of \$267,300 and the balance remaining from the previous cooperative agreement. After the discussion, Commissioner Ficcaglia asked for a motion to recommend Commission approval of the resolution. The motion was moved by Commission Wilson, seconded by Commissioner Witt and unanimously approved.

Chairperson Ficcaglia introduced the next agenda item, a resolution to Adopt a Revised Fiscal Year 2008 Pinelands Commission Operating Budget. John Stokes suggested the committee go into closed session to discuss confidential matters pertaining to the budget and the current financial situation.

Chairperson Ficcaglia asked for a motion to go into Closed Session. The motion was moved by Commissioner Witt, seconded by Commissioner Tomasello and unanimously approved.

The Committee returned from closed session. Robert Zampella and Theresa Lettman did not return to the meeting.

Donna Connor stated that revisions to the Operating Budget are being proposed. She noted that minor changes have occurred in the budgets for the Pinelands Conservation Fund and the Kirkwood Cohansey Study Fund but that they did not change the total amounts of these budgets. Furthermore, she clarified with the Committee that FY 2008 Operating Budget Note #44 allowing for up to a 10% budget variance provided funds were available elsewhere in the Operating Budget does not pertain to the budgets of other Funds since there was much less flexibility within those accounts.

She reviewed the revisions to the Operating Budget highlighting the proposed changes to the revenue and expenditure accounts. She stated that the Operating Budget is being reduced in total and, although unlikely, a draw from the Commission's fund balance may be needed to offset the fiscal year-end expenditures. Also discussed with the Committee were options to further reduce the Operating Budget in light of the Governor's recommended appropriation for the Commission being cut by 23%. In addition to a few budget changes, the Committee also requested that a temporary hold be placed on the current capital project involving renovations to the second floor of the Barn. As a final note, Donna Connor pointed out that three of the FY 2008 Revised Operating Budget notes will give contracting authorization in excess of \$29,000 to the Executive Director. After the discussion, Commissioner Ficcaglia asked for a motion to recommend Commission approval of the resolution including the discussed changes. The motion was moved by Commissioner Wilson, seconded by Commissioner Tomasello and unanimously approved.

Commissioner Brown left near the end of the budget discussion.

Chairperson Ficcaglia introduced the next agenda item, Discussion of Application Fees. Staff member Karen Young entered the meeting.

John Stokes stated that he had analyzed application fee rates and was recommending some changes. He discussed the changes in detail as well as compared those recommended fee rates with the fee rates charged by DEP for similar reviews. During the discussion, the Committee requested a few changes be made and asked John to prepare a formal recommendation for the next meeting.

Commissioner Witt and Karen Young left the meeting.

Chairperson Ficcaglia introduced the next agenda item, Check Register and Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Disbursements for February 2008. Donna Connor provided information on the checks and electronic fund transfers.

Chairperson Ficcaglia introduced the next agenda item, Other Items of Interest, which included the following updates:

Employee Actions (February 2008) –Donna Connor reviewed this information.

Fenwick Manor Renovations Update – As discussed earlier, John Stokes stated that although the NJ Building Authority is ready to begin the bid process for the barn renovations, he would like to put a temporary hold on the project because of uncertainty with the Commission's FY 2009 financial situation. The Committee agreed.

Application Fees Update – Donna Connor stated that February fees were still on the low side but that a large fee was received in early March.

Chairperson Ficcaglia introduced the next agenda item, Meeting Open for Public Comment/Questions. Jay Mounier asked the Committee to take into consideration the fees be proposed for applications for a single family dwelling and not-for-profit organizations.

With no further items to discuss, Chairperson Ficcaglia asked for a motion for Adjournment. The motion was moved by Commissioner Wilson, seconded by Commissioner Tomasello and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.